



GOVERNOR JOSH SHAPIRO

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Shapiro Administration Plugs 300th Orphaned or Abandoned Well, Continuing Historic Progress Strengthening Communities and Creating Jobs

Under Governor Shapiro's leadership, DEP has made historic progress by plugging 300 wells across the Commonwealth – more wells in two years than the Commonwealth has plugged in the previous 11 years combined.

Plugging leaking abandoned wells reduces methane emissions, creates jobs, protects public health, and opens up opportunities for rural communities.





Washington, PA – Today, **Governor Josh Shapiro** and **Department of Environmental Protection (DEP)** officials joined **Penn Mechanical Group** and local leaders in Washington County to plug the 300th orphaned or abandoned well under the Shapiro Administration. The Shapiro Administration has surpassed the number of wells plugged in the previous decade in just two years – the latest historic milestone under Governor Shapiro’s leadership to protect public health and create jobs by aggressively plugging these wells all across Western Pennsylvania.

The 300th well was plugged in North Franklin Township, Washington County under an emergency contract with Penn Mechanical Group, a family-owned and operated company located in Indiana, PA. The well – which is leaking methane – sits between two reservoirs on the site of the township’s future Waterside Park, an 89-acre park to connect residents to greenspaces, outdoor recreation, environmental education, and serve as a community hub.

“When I took office, I directed the Department of Environmental Protection to move aggressively to draw down state and federal funding to make a meaningful impact plugging orphaned and abandoned wells. Today, I’m proud to announce that this well will be the 300th well plugged during my time as Governor,” said **Governor Josh Shapiro**. “By plugging orphaned and abandoned wells, we’re tackling a significant source of greenhouse gas emissions and creating thousands of good-paying jobs in the process. This is a smart, commonsense way to protect public health and create jobs – and I’m going to continue to work with DEP to put state and federal funding to good use by plugging these wells that create problems across rural Pennsylvania.”

“These wells dot the Western Pennsylvania landscape, posing hazards for residents and the environment and hampering all manner of development, including what will become a local and regional recreational amenity here in North Franklin Township,” said **DEP Acting Secretary Jessica Shirley**. “By maximizing every funding source available to DEP through state funding and federal programs like the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, we can ensure that Pennsylvania’s inventory of orphaned and abandoned wells continues to shrink, while creating jobs and protecting the environment in the process.”

“With the efforts of Governor Shapiro, his administration, and DEP, we have been able to get non-producing wells plugged prior to them becoming an environmental concern,” said **Bryan Treese, Operations Manager for Penn Mechanical Group**. “These feats could not be achieved without a good working relationship.”

The Shapiro Administration is committed to plugging as many wells as possible in the shortest possible time. That’s why Governor Shapiro has proposed and secured state funding for DEP’s Office of Oil and Gas Management in his budget proposals. Last year, in the bipartisan 2024-25 budget, Governor Shapiro secured an additional \$11 million in state funding to support DEP’s work of finding and plugging abandoned wells. This year, in his [2025-26 budget proposal](#), Governor Shapiro has proposed a \$13 million increase in state funding.

Governor Shapiro has also directed DEP to leverage all available federal funds for this effort. In October 2022, DEP’s well plugging work was supercharged by the award of \$25 million under an Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) Initial Grant through the US Department of the Interior (DOI).

In September 2024, DEP received an additional \$76.4 million from DOI under a Phase 1 Formula Grant award to continue well plugging efforts. DEP has applied for another \$114 million under a Phase 2 Formula Grant and is eligible to receive \$114 million more through a Phase 3 Formula Grant.

In February, Governor Shapiro filed a lawsuit challenging the Trump Administration’s unconstitutional freeze of federal funding, and thanks to the Governor’s lawsuit and continued engagement with the Trump Administration, this funding is currently accessible to DEP.

Funding from IIJA has also allowed Pennsylvania to create the first of its kind in the nation Orphan Well Plugging Grant Program (OWPGP), which provides a potential funding mechanism for any person, for-profit or non-profit business, local government, or institution with access to a qualified well plugger to apply for a reimbursement grant to plug and remediate orphan wells.

This program provides opportunities for property owners with unwanted or unused wells on their property to receive an assistance grant to plug relatively less complex orphan

wells, while DEP focuses efforts on tackling higher priority and more difficult orphan well plugging projects.

DEP has identified over 27,000 orphan and abandoned wells and is prioritizing those posing the highest risks. New plugging contracts will focus on these high-priority wells, along with nearby wells, to maximize efficiency and preempt environmental threats. Pennsylvania's long history of energy development dates to 1859, when the first commercial oil well was drilled in Titusville. More information about [the orphan and abandoned well plugging program](#) is available on DEP's website: [Rewriting Pennsylvania's Legacy](#).

For more information, visit the [Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection's website](#), or follow DEP on [Facebook](#), [X \(formerly Twitter\)](#), [Instagram](#), or [LinkedIn](#).

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